

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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P 221730Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5516

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S E C R E T RABAT 3022

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PEPR, PBOR, XF, SY, LE, IS, UNSC

SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON: DEMARCHE IN SUPPORT OF UNIFIL

REF: STATE 126253

1. POL COUNSELOR CALLED ON MFA DIRECTOR FOR ARAB AFFAIRS MOHAMMED SAADANI MAY 19 TO MAKE DETAILED PRESENTATION BASED ON REFTEL IN PREPARATION FOR SUBSEQUENT DEMARCHE BY AMBASSADOR WITH FONMIN BOUCETTA. SAADANI AGREED WITH BASIC THRUST OF OUR ARGUMENTS AND NOTED CONTINUING GOM CONTACTS WITH PLO, INCLUDING AT RECENT DAKAR ISLAMIC CONFERENCE. HE GAVE ASSESSMENT THAT PLO, ESPECIALLY FATAH COMPONENT, HAD BECOME "RELATIVELY" MODERATE. AT DAKAR, FOR EXAMPLE, PLO HAD INDICATED A WILLINGNESS TO TAKE A NEW LOOK AT ITS APPROACH TOWARD ISRAEL IF AND WHEN A BREAKTHROUGH OCCURRED AS A RESULT OF PEACE EFFORTS SUCH AS THOSE OF PRESIDENT SADAT. SAADANI ALSO CITED DIFFERING PLO INTERPRETATION OF UNIFIL MANDATE, IN THAT PLO BELIEVED IT HAD RIGHT TO BE PRESENT IN SOUTH LEBANON BASED ON 1969 CAIRO AGREEMENT. SAADANI UNDERTOOK TO BRIEF FOREIGN MINISTER BOUCETTA WITHOUT DELAY ON OUR DEMARCHE.

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2. AMBASSADOR RAISED SUBJECT IN BRIEF MEETING MORNING MAY 22 WITH BOUCETTA, WHO WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE FOR FES TO SEE KING HASSAN. BOUCETTA HAD ALREADY BEEN INFORMED BY SAADANI OF OUR MAY 19 APPROACH. HE CONCURRED REGARDING IMPORTANCE OF SUCCESS FOR UNIFIL. AS FOR MOROCCAN ENCOURAGEMENT OF ARAFAT AND OTHER PLO MODERATES TO COOPERATE

WITH UNIFIL, BOUCETTA AGREED TO TRY TO BE HELPFUL. HE NOTED THAT HE PERSONALLY HAD REGULAR CONTACTS WITH PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVES. SPECIFICALLY NAMING PLO REPRESENTATIVE IN NEW YORK, LABIB TERZI, BOUCETTA CHARACTERIZED HIM AS A KEY MODERATE. NOTING THAT TERZI HAD RECENTLY PUBLICLY RECOGNIZED THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL, BOUCETTA SAID THAT ALTHOUGH OTHERS IN PLO HAD SUBSEQUENTLY REFUTED HIS POSITION, FACT THAT OFFICIAL OF TERZI'S STATURE MADE STATEMENT WAS IMPORTANT. BOUCETTA RECALLED THAT HE HAD ALREADY RECOMMENDED US CONTACT WITH TERZI, WHOSE MODERATION SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED AND UTILIZED. IN ABSENCE OF ANY REPLY FROM THE US ON THIS AND OTHER SUGGESTIONS REGARDING DISCREET CONTACT WITH PALESTINIANS, IT HAD BECOME MORE DIFFICULT FOR GOM TO CONTINUE PRESENTING US VIEWS TO THE PALESTINIANS, BOUCETTA ADDED. HE SAID HE WOULD RAISE THIS ISSUE WHEN HE SAW THE SECRETARY ON MAY 25 IN NEW YORK, AS MOROCCO COULD BE MORE EFFECTIVE ON ISSUES ON WHICH WE SHARE VIEWS IF COMMUNICATION WENT IN BOTH DIRECTIONS.

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